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I find it surprising and disheartening that the National Association of Broadcasters considers satellite radio, and specifically XM traffic and weather stations, a threat. Radio and satellite radio are almost two different media; while satellite receivers are an option in some new car models, the vast majority of the cars on the road do not have them. I myself rely on local AM stations for traffic reports while on the road. When I am at home, I rely on the internet -- is that NAB's next target?

My father is a broadcast engineer, and a member of NAB. He has been working in radio for over thirty years. He also owns an XM receiver, and not once has he felt his job threatened by this new media.

If satellite radio is preferred over "normal" radio, it is other factors at work. I listen to XM satellite radio while at home because it provides me with quality, commercial-free music, often in styles that I cannot find on the regular radio dial. There are no commercial-free rock stations that I am aware of in the Los Angeles area; neither are there any notable techno, disco, dance, blues, or 90's stations. The only classic swing station I am aware of is an AM station. XM is the only place I can turn to for hours' worth of classic radio dramas, world music, and playlists that are free of the mind-numbingly generic influence of ClearChannel.

Once again an organization rises up against a new media out of fear; once again, if there is any danger, it is because of the stagnation of the original media. TV and video did not kill the movie industry; they revived it. Recordable home audio media such as cassettes have not destroyed the music sales industry; rather, it is inflated prices for CDs that have increased piracy. Satellite radio does not endanger radio with localized content; it merely shows that there is something lacking in "normal" radio that people are willing to pay money to get.

I ask myself if those who have written NAB's petition 04-160 have ever listened to XM's traffic and weather stations. The bitrate is so low that the voices sound synthesized. It is not something one can listen to for very long.

I pay good money to listen to XM; I also listen to conventional radio for free. I cannot believe that NAB wants to tell me what I can and cannot listen to. I urge the FCC to reject the NAB's petition, and not to get involved in an industry battle that does not require government intervention.